

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

----- 121284

R 041911Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8166

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 08529

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, US

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER  
CHIRAC

1. PURSUANT TO OUR AGREEMENT TO SEE EACH OTHER  
REGULARLY, I HAD LUNCH APRIL 4 WITH PRIME MINISTER  
CHIRAC AT HIS OFFICIAL MATIGNON RESIDENCE. AS IN OUR  
PREVIOUS MEETING (PARIS 2252 ), CHIRAC WAS MOST VOLUBLE  
ABOUT THE F-104 REPLACEMENT QUESTION. HE ALSO HAD  
COMMENTS ABOUT CSCE AND THE CURRENT GOF PERCEPTION OF  
THE US INTERNAL SCENE.

2. F-104 REPLACEMENT ISSUE: POINTING TO THE SOMBER NEWS  
FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA AND PORTUGAL, AND EMPHASIZING THE  
DANGERS IN SPAIN, ITALY AND ELSEWHERE IN SOUTHERN  
EUROPE, CHIRAC SAID A STRONG EUROPE IS NEEDED TO CLOSE  
THE GATE TO COMMUNIST ADVANCE IN THE WEST. THE US  
DEMONSTRATED ITS OPPOSITION TO A STRONG EUROPE, CHIRAC  
SAID BY EXERTING POLITICAL PRESSURE TO WIN THE F-104  
REPLACEMENT COMPETITION ON BEHALF OF THE YF-16. CHIRAC  
SAID IT WAS NOT A QUESTION OF SAFEGUARDING EMPLOYMENT OR  
A PARTICULAR BUSINESS ENTERPRISE, BUT OF CREATING THE  
CONDITIONS FOR A STRONGLY UNITED POLITICAL EUROPE.  
THE MIRAGE'S LOSS OF THE COMPETITION CONSTITUTES A  
SETBACK FOR THIS IDEA OF A UNITED EUROPE, AND CONSEQUENT-  
LY FOR THE OVERALL WESTERN DEFENSE AGAINST COMMUNIST  
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ADVANCES. CHIRAC SAID HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO OUR

EXERTING POLITICAL PRESSURE TO WIN A CONTRACT. IN FACT, HE HAD MADE A POLITICAL DECISION TO REQUIRE AIR FRANCE TO BUY THE FRENCH MANUFACTURED MERCURE AIRCRAFT FOR ITS MEDIUM RANGE REQUIREMENTS INSTEAD OF THE BOEING JETS WHICH AIR FRANCE REALLY WANTS. HE JUST WANTED US TO UNDERSTAND HIS BELIEF THAT HE FEELS THE US MADE A STRATEGIC MISTAKE IN THIS MATTER. I MAINTAINED MY PREVIOUS ARGUMENT THAT EUROPE IS PART OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE, AND THAT IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF THAT ALLIANCE TO CHOOSE THE BEST AVAILABLE AIRCRAFT THROUGH THE PROCESS OF REGULAR COMMERCIAL COMPETITION. THE SELECTION OF THE BEST PLANE COULD ONLY STRENGTHEN THE ALLIANCE, NOT WEAKEN IT.

3. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT CHIRAC WAS UPSET BY MORNING HEADLINES WHICH SHOW CONSORTIUM DEFENSE MINISTERS LEANING TOWARD YF-16. IN ADDITION, THIS WAS FIRST INDICATION WE HAVE HAD THAT GOF HAS ACTUALLY ORDERED AIR FRANCE TO BUY MERCURE INSTEAD OF MORE DESIRABLE BOEING AIRCRAFT. EMBASSY WILL FOLLOW UP FOR DETAILS.

4. CSCE: SINCE CHIRAC RECENTLY RETURNED FROM AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION, THE CONVERSATION NATURALLY TURNED TOWARD HIS IMPRESSIONS. HE SAID HE

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 041911Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8167

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 08529

EXDIS

WAS HIGHLY IMPRESSED BY SOVIET INDUSTRIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

IN THE IRKUTSK AREA WHICH HE VISITED OVER A WEEKEND. ON CSCE, HE SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE WESTERN POWERS ARE ALL STAMPEDING TOWARD THE HELSINKI SUMMIT, AND THAT IT WAS USELESS TO CONTINUE THE DEBATE ON BASKET THREE. THE SOVIETS WILL NOT ALLOW READING ROOMS IN MOSCOW, AND IT IS ABSURD TO CONTINUE THE ARGUMENT. HE SAID HE TOLD BREZHNEV THAT FRANCE WILL ATTEND BECAUSE EVERYONE ELSE HAS ALREADY DONE SO, INCLUDING THE GERMANS, THE ITALIANS, THE BRITISH AND THE AMERICANS. I DEMURRED, POINTING OUT THAT WE CONTINUED TO STICK TO THE VLADIVOSTOK LINE WHICH REQUIRES SATISFACTORY RESULTS IN STAGE II BEFORE WE CAN AGREE TO A SUMMIT. CHIRAC EXPRESSED SURPRISE, SAYING THAT HE HAD THOUGHT FRANCE WAS THE LAST TO AGREE.

5. COMMENT: NONE OF OUR REPORTS TO DATE INDICATE PRECISELY WHAT CHIRAC SAID TO BREZHNEV IN MOSCOW. CHIRAC'S OWN SUMMARY ACCOUNT IS IN OUR VIEW NOT INCONSISTENT WITH REPORT OF VISIT GIVEN US BY LABOULAYE (PARIS 08198). THUS IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT FRENCH FOLLOWED GENERAL EC-NINE LINE ACCEPTING IDEA OF SUMMIT IN PRINCIPLE' EVEN THOUGH THEY FAILED TO GET SOVIET AGREEMENT ON READING ROOMS. HOWEVER, SO FAR AS WE KNOW NOW, NEITHER CHIRAC NOR HIS DELEGATION AGREED TO ANY PRECISE TIMING FOR SUMMIT; AND, IF LABOULAYE'S ACCOUNT IS TO BE CREDITED, LEFT LEEWAY FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATION, PARTICULARLY ON QUESTION OF QUADRIPARTITE RIGHTS AND OTHER PRINCIPLES AND TO A LESSER EXTENT ON CBM'S. CONFIDENTIAL

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6. US INTERNAL SCENE: CHIRAC SAID HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE APPARENT INCREASE OF CONGRESSIONAL POWER IN THE US AT THE EXPENSE OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. FRANCE HAD A STRONG LEGISLATURE IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC AND HAD SUFFERED FOR IT. HE WONDERED IF CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS DID NOT TEND TO WEAKEN US FOREIGN POLICY RESOLVE. I ASSURED HIM THAT WHILE THE US IS GOING THROUGH A CYCLICAL UPSURGE IN CONGRESSIONAL POWER, HE SHOULD NOT CONCLUDE FROM THIS DEVELOPMENT THAT US FOREIGN POLICY RESOLVE HAS DIMINISHED. IN LINE WITH PRESIDENT FORD'S PRESS CONFERENCE, I ASSURED HIM THAT WE REMAIN FAITHFUL TO OUR ALLIANCES. RUSH

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